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Sen. Birkholz comments on environmental budgets

LANSING – Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Twp., offered the following comments on the Department of Environmental Quality and Department of Natural Resources budgets passed today:

“The DEQ budget as passed by the Senate will mean a further reduction in spending for the DEQ, a move that many state departments also have experienced. We have preserved many critical programs with a focused attempt on preserving our state's water quality. I fought for an amendment that will specifically set aside \$50,000 for the DEQ to spend on beach monitoring in the 24th District. We also added \$250,000 for spending to develop a new water quality monitoring program in Algonac in an effort to address significant water quality concerns in Lake St. Clair.

“The DNR budget has been reduced through responsible cuts in travel expenses and reduced funding for bovine tuberculosis research, since the necessary research has been completed in this area. We have, however, increased funding for marine safety grants and have made it easier for local communities to get snowmobile enforcement dollars. We also added one new state forester position to focus specifically on southwest Michigan.”

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